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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER OCI #1028/72
18 Dec. 1972More Personnel Shifts in Romania

Four prominent Judet (county) leaders have been shifted to positions in the federal government. Those affected include a candidate politburo member from Dolj, Constantin Babalau, who has been named to the post of Minister of Electric Energy; Nicolae Mihai from Braila, who has been appointed First Deputy of the State Planning Committee; Traian Dudas from Mehediuti, who has been appointed Minister Secretary in the Ministry of Heavy Machine Building; and Ilie Cisu from Prahova who is now Minister Secretary in the Chemical Ministry. Each of the latter positions is newly established. Aldea Militaru also was reassigned from his job as central committee section chief for party organs to Minister Secretary in the Ministry of agriculture, Food Industry and Water.

In general, the shifts appeared to be part of the preliminary moves in preparations for Judet party elections scheduled to take place before the end of the year. The transfers also fit in with Ceausescu's established policy both of beefing up those ministries which contribute most to the export market as well as giving party officials experience in government slots. In more specific terms, Mihai's transfer to the planning commission (given his background in economics and Ceausescu's current emphasis on fulfilling the five-year economic plan ahead of schedule) appears to be a promotion. Babalau's move to the Ministry of Electric Energy is in keeping with recent emphasis on upgrading the Council of Ministers (his predecessor Octavian Groza was a candidate, not a full member of the central committee). In the cases of Dudas, Cisu and Militaru, there is no evidence to indicate whether these shifts are a move up or down in their careers. Often in the past, special minister secretary positions, in the government have been created in order to put technocrats such as these men, on hold until new assignments fitting their backgrounds and talents can be made.

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New Serb Party Secretary in Hot Water

Nikola Petronic's position as Secretary of the Serb party central committee is on much shakier ground as a result of

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the two-day Serb party plenum last week... An argument apparently began at a Serb plenum last month between Petronic and Moma Dugalic, Secretary of the party organization in the Belgrade Army District, and it was continued last week by Dugalic, who claimed that he was "compelled to return once more in order to establish the truth." It is not yet clear what the point of contention is... Of importance, however, are Dugalic's remarks that Petronic "has not renounced the earlier practice and work methods of the secretariat." In addition, Dugalic claimed that "with such behavior they (Petronic and presumably certain members of the secretariat) cannot enjoy my confidence, nor am I prepared for any kind of compromise in this matter."

In contrast to lengthy coverage of Dugalic's remarks, Tanjug merely mentioned that Petronic offered an "explanation." At the end of the discussion, Tihomir Vlaskalic, President of the Central Committee proposed that the Central Committee approve Moma Dugalic's statement and that it be given the same treatment in public as Petronic's statement. This was approved.

That Dugalic, a member of the military party organization, can stand up to the party secretary shows the political clout which the military has. Petronic's weak position is also shown by the fact that Vlaskalic did not back him up.

There were other indications of dissatisfaction with the Secretariat. It was increased in size from 9 to 13 members, possibly in order to offset the predominance of unpurged proteges of ex-party boss Nikezic... Six of the thirteen members are new appointees and, with Petronic's vote, make up a new majority.

Vlaskalic, in his remarks, said that the party cannot be satisfied with the pace of political activity. It, according to him, is moving "pretty slowly." The secretariat is to blame for this state of affairs, because of "insufficient organization and application of the Central Committee itself and its organs and bodies."

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It seems likely that there will be further personnel shifts in order to correct this situation.

Second Meeting of Premiers Postponed

The second meeting of Premiers Kosygin and Fock, originally scheduled for late this year, has slipped into 1973.

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Speaking to the National Assembly on 13 December, Hungarian Deputy Premier (and CEMA representative) Valyi revealed that Fock and Kosygin will meet to discuss long-term cooperation "sometime in the spring." After discussing Soviet-Hungarian economic differences with Kosygin in March, Fock publicly claimed that the two Premiers would get together at the end of the year to sign several new agreements. Despite a probable general concurrence on the issues at hand, spirited haggling over the details has evidently taken longer than expected. [redacted]

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Hungarian Emphasis on Ideology

A Hungarian "ideological conference" has been scheduled for sometime next month, according to [redacted] the Embassy in Budapest. The session, which will bring together all the Hungarian cultural big wheels (and "some of the smaller ones"), will evidently put on an "orthodox" appearance that [redacted] might lead outsiders to conclude Budapest is rethinking its cultural liberalization. Such an interpretation [redacted] would be totally wrong; the conference, in effect, is nothing more than window dressing.

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The regime has already laid on some orthodox window dressing this fall. [redacted] An October declaration on "artistic criticism" called for tightening up the "Marxist critical position." While the document explicitly reaffirmed the core of Budapest's flexible cultural policy, it undoubtedly was intended to put the artists and intellectuals on notice to avoid contentious moves for the near future. This latest development will certainly have the effect of reinforcing the customary caution and rigorous self-censorship that have long characterized Hungarian cultural life. Coming at the time of increased discussion of "freer movement" at the CSCE preparatory talks, the conference may well be seen in Helsinki as a hardening of Budapest's position. The regime cannot afford to be forthcoming on "freer movement." Hungarians already enjoy a relative abundance of Western cultural imports. [redacted]

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Prague: More Problems with Intellectuals

The Czechoslovak regime last week soundly rejected and denounced a petition circulated on behalf of the more than thirty intellectuals imprisoned as a result of last summer's subversion trials. The petition, sent to President Ludvik Svoboda, requested either amnesty or at least a short break

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so that the prisoners could spend the holidays with their families. The Czechoslovak Supreme Court last month rejected appeals from this group.

On 16 December, Rude Pravo termed the petition a provocation perpetrated with the aid of "foreign anti-Communist centers." The party daily expressed regret that "individuals were found among the writers who had not seen through this anti-state design of several individuals, (who were) compromised by their active participation in the preparation of the counter-revolutionary coup in 1968." The paper then claimed that by adding their signatures, the petitioners gave support to a current premeditated anti-Czechoslovak campaign in the West." This tends to confirm the rumor that among the 39 signatories of the petition were several members of the reconstituted and heavily-purged writers' union, thereby indicating that the Husak regime continues to be plagued by alienation of Czechoslovakia's intellectuals.

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